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ABSTRACT

This document describes the Heritage Developmental Community (HDC), a program implemented by Brigham Young University's Housing Department and Counseling and Development Center to facilitate and accelerate student development and to create an ecosystem within a university residential setting wherein all parts relate and interact to reach complementary developmental goals. Theoretical perspectives and values of the project are described, as is the setting for the project. Implementation of the project, which began with the creation of a pilot program in the fall of 1985, is reviewed and changes and improvements made since the pilot program are discussed. A section on programming describes the three major programming components of instruction, community activities, and student involvement opportunities. Under the component of instruction, two courses currently offered as part of the HDC project are described: a basic course for residents or participants within the developmental community and a special course for student leaders within the project. The component of community activities lists three activities: (1) periodic large group meetings of all community members; (2) a special "Wellness Fair"; and (3) service projects. The ongoing assessment and evaluation of the project is discussed. A summary supports the developmental-wellness-ecosystem approach and makes five suggestions for others interested in implementing such a program. (NB)

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IMPLEMENTING A WELLNESS AND ECOSYSTEM PROGRAM IN A UNIVERSITY HOUSING SYSTEM:

Heritage Developmental Community

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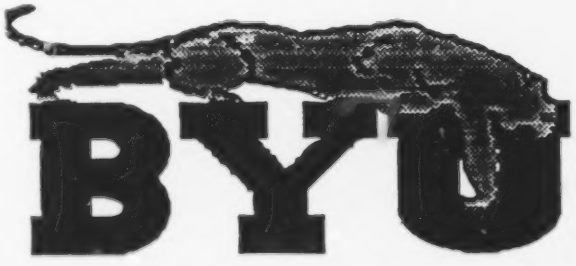

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IMPLEMENTING A WELLNESS AND ECOSYSTEM PROGRAM IN A UNIVERSITY HOUSING SYSTEM:

The Heritage Developmental Community

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For the past three years the Housing Department and the Counseling and Development Center at Brigham Young University have been engaged in a joint effort to implement student development theory, ecosystem planning and concepts of wellness. The aim has been to provide a demonstration of how the resources of the two sectors of the university can be marshalled to offer students living in a campus residential setting a unique, growth-promoting experience.

Purpose

The purpose of the Heritage Developmental Community (HDC) is to facilitate and accelerate student development. The major goal of HDC has been to create an ecosystem within a university residential setting wherein all parts relate and interact to reach complementary developmental goals. This is consistent with the stated mission of Brigham Young University that all programs, instruction and services should make a contribution towards the balanced development of the total person.

The HDC is an outgrowth of meetings held by the Executive Vice President and Dean of Students at BYU in Fall 1984. The challenge was to find a way to impact student development by utilizing campus resources within an intentionally planned campus residential community. A steering committee organized groups from the Housing Department and Student Life to explore campus resources, study student development literature, and evaluate developmental programs that had been operating at other universities.

Setting

Brigham Young University is a private institution of higher education sponsored by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The student body of 27,000 comes from all over the world, with the majority from the Western United States. Most are church members who attend student congregations of approximately 200 individuals.

The housing area chosen for the study, Heritage Halls, consists of twenty-four apartment style residence halls housing over 1,500 students. Each residence hall contains approximately ten three-bedroom apartments housing six students. Each hall has central lounge areas conducive for small group activities, study, and hall councils. A central building provides services and large group activities.

Twelve head resident couples provide peer counseling, providing support for hall government, support services, liaison with housing management and, very importantly, a role model for family life. They are assisted by twelve undergraduate resident assistants.

Theoretical Perspectives and Values

Guidance for the HDC project has come largely through the adoption and implementation of a heuristic model that identifies interfaces between ecological, developmental and wellness perspectives. The model, shown in Figure, 1 has been set forth by Clyde E. Sullivan, Director of the Counseling and Development Center at Brigham Young University, who was one of the originators and driving forces behind the Heritage Developmental Community. The model has been useful in considering ways in which a program can be defined so as to impact students' development across a number of wellness areas and at the same time take into account the ecosystem of which the students are a part.

In terms of development, Chickering's (1969) theory of psychosocial development has served as the model for much of the program planning in HDC. The developmental tasks described by Chickering have been seen as highly relevant to the desired student behavioral outcomes of the HDC and to the content of the instruction provided by the project. The wellness component of the Heritage project has drawn heavily from the work of Bill Hettler (1980). His six wellness areas have provided a framework which has helped in the identification of content for instruction and other activities within HDC. Furthermore, Hettler's ideas have been helpful in designing a campus housing community that promotes the balanced development of the whole person. Ecosystem planning within the HDC has benefitted from the ideas of James H. Banning (1974,1986). His ecosystem design process, shown in Figure 2, was utilized from the outset of the HDC and continues to give guidance to the on-going collection of student perceptions of the HDC ecosystem and the monitoring of resultant student behavior and development. Feedback from students and university staff working with the HDC is continually used in order to improve on the student/environment fit and to more fully reach the goals of the Heritage project.

Also helpful to HDC planning has been Lewin's conceptualization of behavior as a function of the interaction between the person and the environment ($B = f\ P \times E$). The formula has been reintroduced by Banning in the context of ecosystem planning and has been useful in identifying the desired outcomes of the project in terms of student behavior and also the person and environmental variables that can be worked with in arriving at the desired outcomes. Figure 3 illustrates our application of Banning's model in the Heritage project. Our goals and the means to achieve these goals have become clearer as we make use of the ecosystem planning that has been a central part of the HDC.

An additional perspective that has benefitted the Heritage Developmental Community has been provided by the philosophy and operational principles articulated for developmental-ecological programming at Brigham Young University. This perspective has been described by Sorenson (1987): "We discovered that the journey is the reality. When one undertakes a journey and

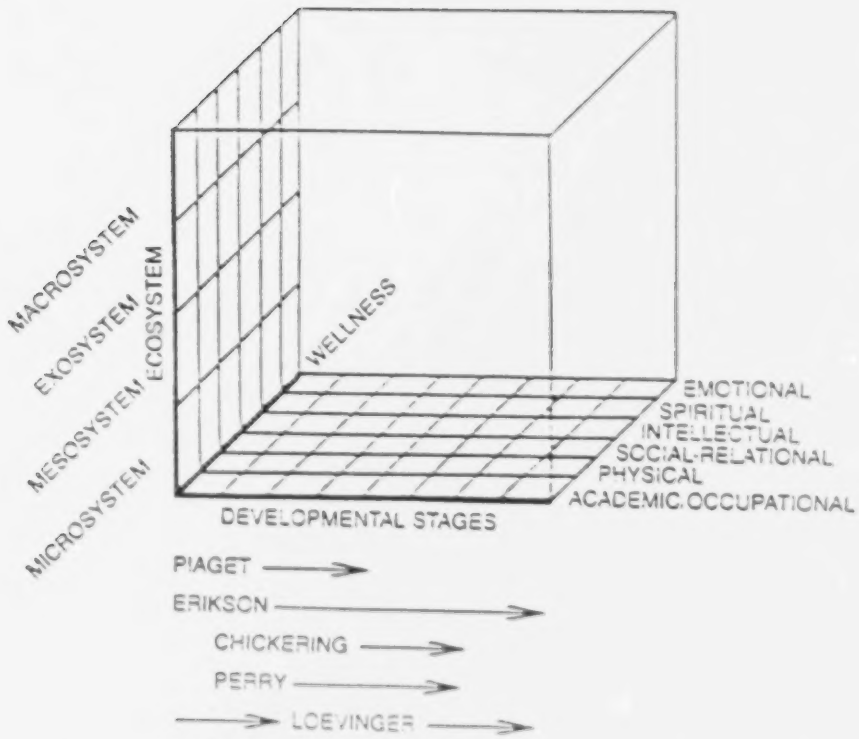

Figure 3
Heuristic Model to Identify Interfaces Between Ecological, Developmental, and Wellness Insights

Figure 1

Sullivan, C.E. (1987). Developmental, ecological theories and wellness approaches: A synthesis for student life programming. NASPA Journal, 25, **18-27.**

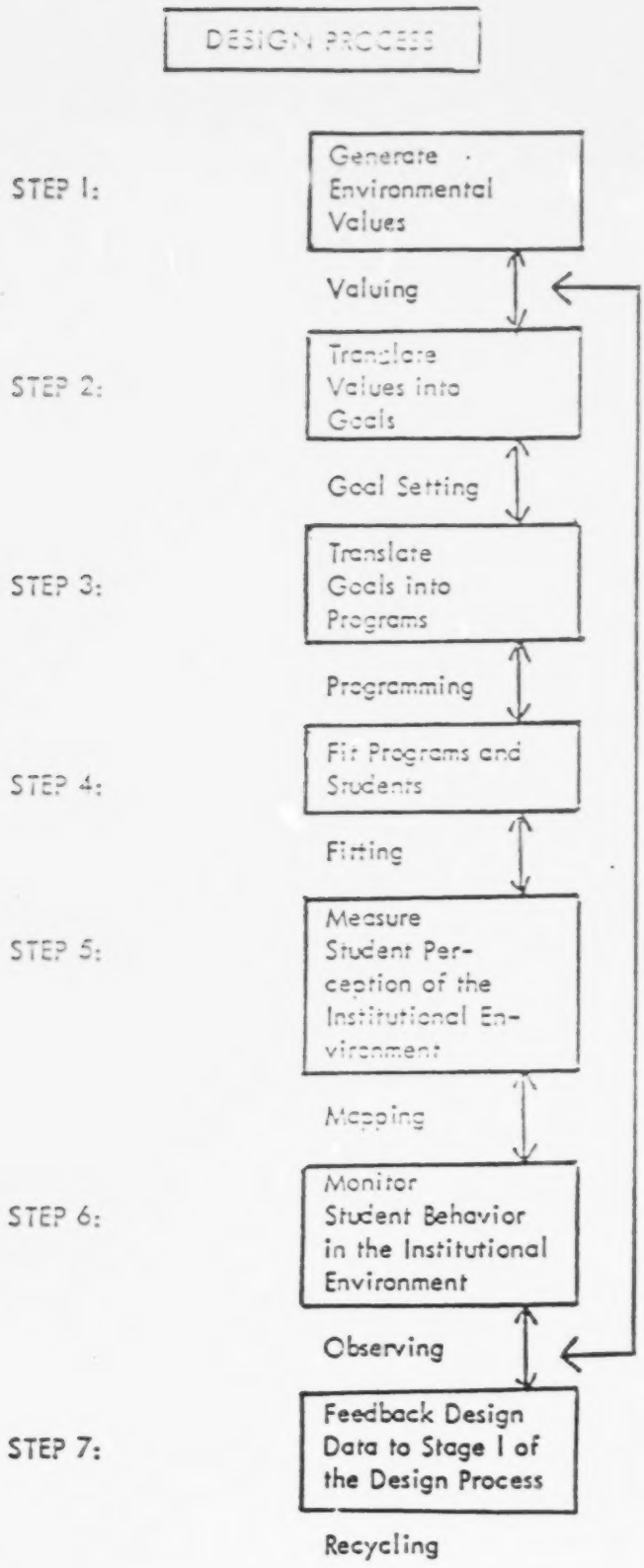

Figure 2

Banning, J.H. (1986). Campus ecology: A perspective for student affairs. Presented at the Campus Ecology Symposium, Pingree Park, Colorado, June 23-26, 1986.

Intended Student Behavioral Outcomes and Related Person and Environment Variables for the Heritage Developmental Community

Behavior= f	Person X	Environment
Student Involvement and Citizenship	Current Developmental Level	Environmental Resources (Aerobics, Computer/Writing Labs, Study Rooms, Walk-in Counseling, Hall and Area Activities, Apartment Living Resource Center)
Balanced Student Development	Self-Understanding	
Student Wellness Occupational/ Academic Physical Spiritual Emotional Social/Relational Intellectual	Relationship Skills	
	Emotional Management Skills	Staff
	Age	Instruction/Training (Workshops, etc.)
Student Satisfaction with Campus Living	Sex	
	Attitudes	Opportunities for Student Influence and Innovation
	Values	
	Goals	Physical Facilities
	Motivation	Church
	Previous Experience	Apartment-Hall-Area Ecosystem
	Personal Commitment	

Figure 3

Heritage Developmental Community Ecosystem Planning

it remains a journey rather than a means to some end, interesting things happen" (p.41) This philosophy has allowed us to take our time and find our way, discovering some interesting possibilities and improvements that would perhaps have been obscured if we had been in a hurry to arrive at a preconceived destination.

Implementation

A pilot program began Fall 1985 in three designated halls as a cooperative effort between the Housing Department and the Counseling and Development Center, a division of Student Life. The project initially consisted of weekly workshops taught by Housing management staff, head residents and Counseling and Development Center staff. The curriculum for the workshops was developed by those involved in teaching in the HDC. Initial curriculum design was an attempt to choose and prepare topics of developmental and interpersonal relevance to the students. The content of this course is described more fully later in this paper. After the first semester of teaching the workshops, feedback from students indicated that academic credit would serve as an important incentive for student involvement. One hour of credit was offered for the course starting in winter of 1986. Large group meetings were also held from the inception of HDC in an effort to establish a community feeling and to involve non-workshop participants in HDC activities related to project goals.

During the second year of the HDC, 1986-87, two additional halls were included, bringing the total to five. The basic course curriculum was evaluated and revised, making heavy use of information obtained through surveying participating students. At this time a more intentional approach to curriculum development was instituted using Chickering's developmental vectors and Hettler's wellness model. One of the major values of the HDC has been student involvement in the ecosystem. Therefore, program improvements were made to support this aim. A course for student leaders, individuals who had taken the basic course the previous year, was developed and offered. The intent was to provide these students with knowledge and experience in areas that would allow them to provide leadership within the community. The content of this course is described more fully later in this paper. It was taught by a counselor from the Counseling and Development Center. A Community Council for the HDC was also implemented during this year. It consisted of representatives from the various sections of the basic course. The council met periodically to discuss issues related to the HDC and to assist in the planning and conducting of the large group meetings. The programming supervisor from Heritage Halls was given responsibility for the Community Council.

During the current year of the HDC (1987-88), several other changes and improvements have been made. Perhaps the most important change has been to open the project to all of the 24 halls within the Heritage complex. However, participation by students and head residents continues on a voluntary basis. We have observed that this change has made for a much more comfortable integration of the HDC goals and program into the existing structure of Heritage Halls. This change has led to several other refinements in the HDC program. The student leader course was changed to a leadership course for the 24 hall presidents in Heritage Halls. Also, the course is now taught by the programming supervisor and the previous counselor. It was taught in conjunction with the regular weekly meeting for hall presidents.

Another improvement has taken place with regard to the Community Council. It is now comprised of representatives from the several basic course sections and the hall presidents. The function of this council has remained the same. We have observed that by including all of the Heritage complex in the HDC we have been able to provide for a better fit between the existing Heritage environment and the HDC programs.

Further improvement has come in the form of listing the basic course sections in the University class schedule which has allowed students to preregister, by telephone, for the basic course. The basic course curriculum has continued to undergo evaluation and refinement as it is taught. In weekly inservice meetings, those teaching the course offer their views of the lesson taught during the previous week and suggestions for improvements are noted for future implementation. Several individuals new to the HDC from the housing staff and counseling faculty have been recruited to assist in teaching the basic course. Through this means, many individuals from both areas have been introduced to the project and their involvement and support have contributed to the realization of HDC goals. Many students who are now choosing to become involved with the project are doing so because of encouragement from newly involved head residents, other housing staff and counselors.

Programming

Programming within HDC was designed to implement the developmental and wellness philosophies underlying the project. Ecosystem planning was used as the model for designing and implementing the program. Programming for the project consisted of three major components: instruction, activities, and student involvement opportunities.

Instruction. There are several major purposes for instruction within the project: (a) give students and leaders a basic understanding and experience with developmental and wellness principles as they apply to college students; (b) give students and leaders a common language to facilitate discussions during project design, implementation, and evaluation; and (c) give leaders within the community an opportunity to learn and practice developmental leadership, mentoring and counseling skills in support of HDC goals.

There are currently two courses offered as part of the HDC project. The first is a basic course for residents or participants within the developmental community. The second is a special course for student leaders (hall presidents, etc.) within the project.

The process for teaching the curriculum follows a pattern of cognitive development. We attempt to provide experiences which challenge "basic" levels of thinking. Instruction and discussion is then provided in an attempt to have students progress to a more "expansive" level of thinking. Finally, students select homework and special projects which are hoped will provide experiences at a more "refined" level of thinking and application of developmental, wellness, or leadership principles depending upon the goals of the course. This conceptualization of levels of cognitive development relies on the work of Drum (1980).

The HDC course for residents (the basic course) was based on a model of interaction between the ideas of human development (psychosocial development, from the work of Arthur Chickering; and cognitive development, from the work of several theorists as summarized by David Drum) and wellness (from the work of Bill Hettler).

The content of the basic course was designed around a combination of (a) Chickering's seven vectors of psychosocial development (achieving competence, managing emotions, becoming autonomous, establishing identity, freeing interpersonal relationships, clarifying purposes, and developing integrity); and (b) Hettler's wellness model for achieving balanced development or "wholeness" in six areas of living: intellectual, emotional, physical, spiritual, occupational, and relational. The course has been designed to be taught in a two-semester sequence with none of the lessons overlapping from fall to winter semester. However, some students choose to take the course only one semester.

The content of the leadership course was designed around principles of communication, peer counseling, leadership, human development, and learning styles. This course is also a two-semester offering.

Both courses are taught once a week for approximately 90 minutes. The basic course is taught in rooms located within the Heritage Halls complex. Instructors for this course include counselors from the Counseling and Development Center and staff (including management and head residents) from Heritage Halls. Instructors work in teams combining one member each from Counseling and Housing. The leadership course is taught in conjunction with the weekly hall president meeting, and is taught jointly by the Heritage Programming Supervisor and a faculty member from Counseling.

Both courses carry academic credit in General Studies from the Counseling and Development Center. The Center is able to offer credit courses through General Studies and Career Education designations, which are part of the Center's administrative functions. The basic course is offered for one semester hour of credit and the leadership course is offered for two hours of credit.

Community activities. The Heritage Developmental Community sponsors several other types of activities in addition to the above classes. These activities are intended to inform residents about the community, solicit participation, reinforce learning in the classes, promote community identity, and give opportunities for student leadership and involvement.

Community activities have included: (a) periodic large group meetings of all community members; (b) a special "Wellness Fair"; and (c) service projects. (It should be noted that many other activities including regular social events, are an on-going feature of already existing Heritage Halls programming.)

Student involvement opportunities. One of the major goals of the developmental community is to give students significant opportunities for involvement in planning and conducting community activities. A Community Council, comprised of hall presidents and student representatives chosen from each section of the basic course, meets periodically to discuss and make

recommendations about issues or concerns within the community. The council also has had responsibility for planning and conducting the community activities.

What Have We Accomplished?

In line with our commitment to the ecosystem planning model, we are constantly monitoring and measuring the processes and outcomes within the HDC. This on-going assessment has been both formal and informal. As we take stock of what has been accomplished during the three years of its existence, several observations seem appropriate.

Cooperative effort. Two agencies with different roles and separate lines of administrative reporting, Housing and Student Life, have come together in a cooperative effort. Both areas through the Heritage Halls and the Counseling and Development Center have brought together their unique resources to provide students in campus housing with an opportunity for growth and development. Out of this joint effort we hope to provide a model for combining university resources to promote student wellness and development within a context of ecosystem planning.

Developmental-wellness curriculum. An approach to curriculum planning and instruction that involves an intentional blending of developmental and wellness principles has come from our efforts in the HDC. The two courses that have been developed thus far have been well received by the students who have participated. For the 1987-88 year, approximately 10% of the residents in Heritage Halls have taken one of these courses. An additional benefit of the instruction is that staff from Housing and faculty from Counseling have been brought together to team teach. This has increased the collaborative spirit between our two agencies.

We feel that curriculum development carried out for these two courses makes a contribution to the trend seen nationally in higher education to implement developmental principles in the college curriculum to provide students with a developmental education as well as academic preparation. This trend and some examples of institutions where developmental curriculum has been implemented is discussed by Isakson, Lawson and MacArthur (1987).

Training opportunity in a housing community. The HDC project has provided a means whereby all members of a campus housing ecosystem can receive training and experiences in principles of student development, wellness and leadership. This training is in addition to the regular training that is given to the Heritage staff. Students in Heritage Halls have the opportunity of participating in the basic course and hall presidents are being required to take the leadership course. Head residents are receiving training in development and wellness through their involvement as co-instructors for the basic course. Resident assistants will also be trained through a course for them that is to be implemented next year.

Evaluation. As set forth in the ecosystem model, evaluation is the means whereby perceptions and behaviors can be assessed to determine the outcomes of the program and to provide continual feedback for program improvement. In the HDC project we are assessing the areas that we are trying to impact. To

measure developmental change in Chickering's vectors and to provide feedback to students in the basic course, we have used the Student Developmental Task Inventory (SDTI), second edition, by Winston, Miller, & Prince (1979). Attempts have been made to use the SDTI at the beginning and the end of an academic year. However, due to turnover in students from fall to winter semester it has been difficult to implement this evaluation strategy. Therefore, during the next year, the SDTI or the new Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Inventory (also by Winston, Miller and Prince, 1987) will be administered at the beginning and end of fall semester.

To assess the students' perceptions of their campus residential environment and the impact that the HDC may be having on these perceptions, the University Residence Environment Scale (URES) by Gerst and Moos (1974) has been employed. The URES focuses on the nature of relationships between students, between students and housing staff, and on the organizational structure and atmosphere of the housing environment. We have experimented with using the "ideal" form of the URES in the fall to measure what students would see as an ideal living group. We then use the "real" form at the end of winter semester to assess perceptions of the actual environment. The ideal to real assessments of the environment are intended to provide us with information on what students would value in the environment and feedback on how well the environment approximates that ideal. Comparisons are also made between the perceptions of the real environment from year to year to determine whether the environment is changing as the HDC is implemented more fully.

Attempts have been made in the HDC to assess wellness in ways that will be meaningful and helpful to the students. The Lifestyle Assessment Questionnaire (LAQ) by the National Wellness Institute (1980) has been used in the HDC with some success. It has become apparent that the measure of wellness used needs to fit the student population being measured. Therefore, the items of the LAQ are currently being reviewed for possible revision for the Brigham Young University student population. The fact that the National Wellness Institute provides for this tailoring of items on the LAQ makes the instrument more useful for assessing wellness within local programs. We have also found that it is necessary to adequately prepare students to take the LAQ and to have quality debriefing with them after the results are made available. These are issues that the HDC is continuing to deal with in its efforts to provide students with knowledge of their personal wellness.

Participant surveys have been conducted at the end of each year that the HDC has been in existence. The surveys have focused on students' impressions about the HDC, i.e., purpose of the project, reasons for participating and not participating, relevance and usefulness of the instruction and activities of HDC, impact on the personal lives of the students in the different wellness areas, and student suggestions for improvements. Generally, the Heritage project has been viewed as worthwhile and helpful by the students. Their reasons for participating center on a perceived need to get to know themselves and others better and to learn interpersonal skills. Topics related to these areas are viewed as useful as are topics having to do with autonomy, values, owning feelings, problem solving, and wholeness. Personal impact of participation in HDC has been seen primarily in being able to deal with roommate difficulties, better understanding of personal emotions, increased appreciation of intellectual growth, greater realization of spiritual values, and increased understanding of the importance of nutrition, sleep and exercise.

Students have not perceived much impact in their academic/occupational well-being and this provides information that can help us make a better fit between what the students need and what we are providing them through the HDC. To the question of whether the HDC has impacted their satisfaction with living in Heritage Halls, students have responded that no impact has been felt. Other students acknowledge that they can see that the housing administration cares about the students and will listen to them. Some students also said that they felt more involved with other students because of their participation in the HDC. We view the information from our students as being vital to the continuation and improvement of the Heritage project as we apply the ecosystem planning model to our efforts.

Summary

As we look back on three years of HDC experience, we feel good about what has been accomplished thus far and we feel confident about the future contributions that the project can make in the lives of our students as we continue to use our developmental-wellness-ecosystem approach.

Much has been learned during our journey. We share some of our learning in the hope of helping others who may wish to make a similar journey:

1. Plan systematically then be patient and let things unfold. Some things cannot be learned until you make your best attempt with present knowledge.

2. Build slowly and evaluate as you go and learn from your beginnings.

3. Try not to judge success prematurely in terms of numbers -- students involved, hours taught, scores on tests, etc.

4. Appreciate different perspectives and cultivate mutual respect for different needs, concerns, values and roles within the ecosystem. This has helped us in our collaborative effort.

5. Work with the existing structure or ecosystem first and gradually observe aspects of it that can be changed to realize your desired outcomes. In our situation, that which was being done in Heritage Halls was being done very well and meeting many of the students' needs. Our HDC programs have made additions to the ecosystem that seem to be giving added strength to efforts to bring about the balanced development of our students.

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